

Common Screening and Diagnostic Tests

Test Name	Definition
Angiogram	Exam of your blood vessels using x-rays. The doctor inserts a small tube into the blood vessel and injects dye to see the vessels in the x-ray.
Barium enema	A lubricated enema tube is gently inserted into your rectum. Barium flows into your colon. An x-ray is taken of the large intestines.
Biopsy	Removal of a small piece of tissue to check for health problems. There are different types of biopsies.
Blood test	Blood is taken from a vein in the inside elbow or back of the hand to test for a health problem.
Bone mineral density (BMD) test	X-rays of the bones are tested for osteoporosis, or weakening of the bones.
Bronchoscopy	Exam of the lungs. A bronchoscope, or flexible tube, is put through the nose or mouth and into your windpipe (trachea).
Clinical breast exam (CBE)	A doctor looks at the breasts and underarm areas to find lumps or other problems.
Chest x-ray	An x-ray of the chest, lungs, heart, large arteries, ribs, and diaphragm.
Colonoscopy	A flexible tube is put into the colon through the anus to see the colon.
Computed tomographic (CT or CAT) scan	The patient lies on a table and x-rays of the body are taken from different angles. Sometimes, a fluid is used to highlight parts of the body in the scan.
Echocardiogram	An instrument (that looks like a microphone) is placed on the chest. It uses sound waves to create a moving picture of the heart. A picture appears on a TV screen, and the heart can be seen in different ways.
Electroencephalogram (EEG)	Measures the electrical activity of the brain, using electrodes that are put on the patient's scalp. Sometimes patients sleep during the test.
Electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG)	Records the electrical activity of the heart, using electrodes placed on the arms, legs, and chest.
Exercise stress test	Electrodes are placed on the chest, arms, and legs to record the heart's activity. A blood pressure cuff is placed around the arm and is inflated every few minutes. Heart rate and blood pressure are taken before exercise starts. The patient walks on a treadmill or pedals a stationary bicycle. The pace of the treadmill is increased. The response of the heart is monitored. The test continues until target heart rate is reached. Monitoring continues after exercise for 10 to 15 minutes or until the heart rate returns to normal.

Note: Anesthesia (medicine to block pain or sedate you) is given during some of these tests to keep you comfortable. Be sure to talk with your doctor or nurse about what to expect during and after tests, and how to prepare for tests.

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Fecal occult blood test (FOBT)	Detects hidden blood in a bowel movement. There are two types: the smear test and flushable reagent pads.
Laparoscopy	A small tube with a camera is inserted into the abdomen through a small cut in or just below the belly-button to see inside the abdomen and pelvis. Other instruments can be inserted in the small cut as well. It is used for both diagnosing and treating problems inside the belly.
Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)	The patient lies on a table which slides into a large tunnel-like tube within a scanner. Small coils may be placed around the head, arm, leg, or to other areas. Powerful magnets and radio waves create pictures of the body.
Mammogram	One breast at a time is rested on a flat surface that contains an x-ray plate. A device presses firmly against the breast. An x-ray is taken to show a picture of the breast.
Medical history	The doctor or nurse talks to the patient about current and past illnesses, surgeries, pregnancies, medications, allergies, use of alternative therapies, vitamins and supplements, diet, alcohol and drug use, physical activity, and family history of diseases.
Pap test	The nurse or doctor uses a small brush to take cells from the cervix (opening of the uterus) to look at under a microscope in a lab.
Pelvic exam	A doctor or nurse asks about the patient's health and looks at the vaginal area. The doctor or nurse checks the tubes, ovaries, and uterus by putting two gloved fingers inside the vagina. With the other hand, the doctor or nurse will feel from the outside for any lumps or tenderness.
Physical exam	The doctor or nurse will test for diseases, assess your risk of future medical problems, encourage a healthy lifestyle, and update your vaccinations.
Positron emission tomography (PET) scan	The patient is injected with a radioactive substance, like glucose. A scanner detects any cancerous areas in the body. Cancerous tissue absorbs more of the substance and looks brighter in images than normal tissue.
Sigmoidoscopy	The sigmoidoscope is a small camera attached to a flexible tube. This tube, about 20 inches long, is gently inserted into the colon. As the tube is slowly removed, the lining of the bowel is examined.
Spirometry	The patient breathes into a mouthpiece that is connected to an instrument called a spirometer. The spirometer records the amount and the rate of air that is breathed in and out over a specified time. It measures how well the lungs exhale.
Ultrasound	A clear gel is put onto the skin over the area being examined. An instrument is then moved over that area. The machine sends out sound waves, which reflect off the body. A computer receives these waves and uses them to create pictures of the body.

General Screenings and Immunizations for Women

These charts are guidelines only. Your doctor will personalize the timing of each test and immunization to meet your health care needs. Use the stickers to remind yourself of these exams.

Screening Tests	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-64	Ages 65 +
General Health Full checkup, including weight and height	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.
Thyroid test (TSH)	Start at age 35, then every 5 years	Every 5 years	Every 5 years	Every 5 years
Heart Health Blood pressure test	Start at age 21, then once every 1-2 years if normal	Every 1-2 years	Every 1-2 years	Every 1-2 years
Cholesterol test	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Start at age 45, then every 5 years	Every 5 years	Every 5 years
Bone Health Bone mineral density test		Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Get a bone density test at least once. Talk to your doctor or nurse about repeat testing.
Diabetes Blood sugar test	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Start at age 45, then every 3 years	Every 3 years	Every 3 years
Oral Health Dental exam	One to two times every year	One to two times every year	One to two times every year	One to two times every year
Reproductive Health Pap test & pelvic exam	Every 1-3 years if you have been sexually active or are older than 21	Every 1-3 years	Every 1-3 years	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.
Chlamydia test	If sexually active, yearly until age 25	If you are at high risk for chlamydia or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), you may need this test. <i>See STD section.</i>	If you are at high risk for chlamydia or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), you may need this test. <i>See STD section.</i>	If you are at high risk for chlamydia or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), you may need this test. <i>See STD section.</i>
Sexually transmitted disease (STD) tests	Talk to your doctor or nurse if you or your partner have had sexual contact with more than one person OR if either of you have ever had a STD.	Talk to your doctor or nurse if you or your partner have had sexual contact with more than one person OR if either of you have ever had a STD.	Talk to your doctor or nurse if you or your partner have had sexual contact with more than one person OR if either of you have ever had a STD.	Talk to your doctor or nurse if you or your partner have had sexual contact with more than one person OR if either of you have ever had a STD.

This chart lists recommended screenings and immunizations for women at average risk for most diseases.

General Screenings and Immunizations for Women

These charts are guidelines only. Your doctor will personalize the timing of each test and immunization to meet your health care needs. Use the stickers to remind yourself of these exams.

Screening Tests	Ages 18-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-64	Ages 65 +
Breast Health Mammogram (x-ray of breast)		Every 1-2 years. Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Every 1-2 years. Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Every 1-2 years. Discuss with your doctor or nurse.
Colorectal Health Fecal occult blood test			Yearly	Yearly
Flexible sigmoidoscopy (with fecal occult blood test is preferred)			Every 5 years	Every 5 years
Double contrast barium enema (DCBE)			Every 5-10 years (if not having colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy)	Every 5-10 years (if not having colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy)
Colonoscopy			Every 10 years	Every 10 years
Rectal exam	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Every 5-10 years with each screening (sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, or DCBE)	Every 5-10 years with each screening (sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, or DCBE)
Eye and Ear Health Vision exam with eye care provider	Once initially between age 20 and 39	Every 2-4 years	Every 2-4 years	Every 1-2 years
Hearing test (Discuss with your doctor.)	Starting at age 18, then every 10 years	Every 10 years	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.
Skin Health Mole exam	Monthly mole self- exam; by a doctor every 3 years, starting at age 20.	Monthly mole self- exam; by a doctor every year.	Monthly mole self- exam; by a doctor every year.	Monthly mole self- exam; by a doctor every year.
Mental Health Screening	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.
Immunizations Influenza vaccine	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Discuss with your doctor or nurse.	Yearly	Yearly
Pneumococcal vaccine				One time only
Tetanus-diphtheria booster vaccine	Every 10 years	Every 10 years	Every 10 years	Every 10 years

This chart lists recommended screenings and immunizations for women at average risk for most diseases.

Recommended Screenings and Immunizations for Women with High-Risk Factors

✓ if it applies	Does your family history include?	Then ask your doctor or nurse if you need the following screenings or tests more often or at a younger age:
	High blood pressure	Blood pressure test
	High cholesterol	Cholesterol test
	Heart disease, premature heart disease, or heart attack	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, exercise stress test
	Diabetes	Blood sugar test
	Breast cancer	Mammogram, ovarian screening tests
	Cervical, uterine, or vaginal cancer	Pap test, pelvic exam, ovarian screening tests, colon screening
	Ovarian cancer	Pelvic exam, ovarian screening tests, colon screening, clinical breast exam
	Osteoporosis, bone fracture in adulthood	Bone mineral density test
	Thyroid disease or thyroid cancer	Thyroid test and/or genetic counseling
	Gum (periodontal) disease	Oral exam
	Hearing problems, deafness	Hearing test
	Vision problems, eye disease, blindness	Vision exam
	Inflammatory bowel disease; colon polyps; colon, ovarian, or endometrial cancer	Colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, DCBE, rectal exam, fecal occult blood test
	Cancer, heart disease, or any illness at an unusually young age (50 or younger)	Genetic counseling, possible early screening tests
	Two relatives with the same kind of cancer	Genetic counseling, possible early screening tests
	Birth defects or genetic disorder (you or your partner)	Genetic counseling, possible early screening tests. If you want to become pregnant, genetic counseling for you and your partner.

This chart lists screenings or tests you might need more often or earlier because of having high-risk factors or things in your life that increase your chances of developing a condition or disease.

Recommended Screenings and Immunizations for Women with High-Risk Factors

✓ if it applies	Are you?	Then ask your doctor or nurse if you need the following screenings or tests more often or at a younger age:
	African American	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, blood sugar test, vision exam, colonoscopy, genetic counseling for sickle cell anemia
	Latina	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, blood sugar test, colonoscopy
	Alaska Native or Pacific Islander	Blood sugar test
	American Indian	Blood sugar test
	Ashkenazi Jewish descent	Genetic counseling for Tay-Sachs disease, if you want to become pregnant
	Ashkenazi Jewish with family history of breast or ovarian cancer	Genetic counseling for possible BRCA1/2 mutation
	Asian American	Blood sugar test
	Age 65 or older	Bone mineral density test, flu vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine
	Between the ages of 60 and 64, weigh less than 154 lbs., and not taking estrogen	Bone mineral density test
	College age	MMR vaccine, varicella vaccine
	Postmenopausal	Bone mineral density test
	Pregnant	Blood pressure test, blood sugar test, urine test, HIV test, STD tests, MMR vaccine
	A non-pregnant woman of childbearing age	MMR vaccine, varicella vaccine
	A smoker	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, bone mineral density test, oral exam, vision exam
	Overweight	Blood pressure test, blood sugar test, weight
	Living in prison	Tuberculosis (TB) test, HIV test, STD tests
	Living in long-term care	TB test, influenza vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine
	A health care worker	TB test, influenza vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine, MMR vaccine, varicella vaccine; HIV test; hepatitis screening; hepatitis A, B vaccines

This chart lists screenings or tests you might need more often or earlier because of having high-risk factors or things in your life that increase your chances of developing a condition or disease.

Visit the National Women's Health Information Center web site www.4woman.gov

Recommended Screenings and Immunizations for Women with High-Risk Factors

✓ if it applies	Do you have or have you had?	Then ask your doctor or nurse if you need the following screenings or tests more often or at a younger age:
	High blood pressure	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, blood sugar test
	High cholesterol	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, blood sugar test
	Heart disease	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, blood sugar test, influenza vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine
	Diabetes	Blood pressure test, cholesterol test, blood sugar test, vision exam, urine test
	Gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)	Blood sugar test
	A baby weighing more than 9 lbs.	Blood sugar test
	Breast cancer	Mammogram, ovarian screening tests
	Cervical, uterine, vaginal cancer	Pap test, pelvic exam, ovarian screening tests, colon screening
	Ovarian cancer	Pelvic exam, ovarian screening tests, mammogram, colon screening
	Previous abnormal Pap tests	Pap test, pelvic exam
	Early menopause (natural or surgically induced); absent or infrequent menstrual periods; advanced age; a personal history of bone fracture in adulthood; lifelong low calcium intake; lifelong inactive lifestyle, or little physical activity; low body weight (less than 154 lbs.), or a history of an eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa	Bone mineral density test
	An autoimmune disease (including lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis)	Thyroid test, TB test, influenza vaccine, MMR vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine, autoimmune screening test, bone mineral density test

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Recommended Screenings and Immunizations for Women with High-Risk Factors

✓ if it applies	Do you have or have you had?	Then ask your doctor or nurse if you need the following screenings or tests more often or at a younger age:
	Chronic lung disease	Influenza vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine
	Chronic liver disease	Hepatitis A vaccine
	Thyroid disease	Thyroid test, influenza vaccine, pneumococcal vaccine, bone mineral density test (of hyperthyroid)
	Gum (periodontal) disease	Oral exam
	Colon polyps, inflammatory bowel disease	Colonoscopy
	A developmental delay	Vision exam, hearing test
	Eye injury or disease	Vision exam
	Ear injury or prolonged exposure to loud noise	Hearing test
	HIV/AIDS	Oral exam; vision exam; Pap test; pelvic exam; TB test; thyroid test; STD tests; influenza vaccine; pneumococcal vaccine; hepatitis screening; hepatitis A, B vaccines
	A blood transfusion from 1978 to 1985	HIV test, hepatitis screening
	Multiple sex partners (or a partner who has multiple sex partners)	STD tests, HIV test, hepatitis B and C tests, Pap test, pelvic exam
	Alcoholism	Pneumococcal vaccine, TB test, psychological screening, liver tests
	Intravenous (IV) drug use or addiction	Hepatitis screening; hepatitis A, B vaccines; TB test; STD tests; HIV test; psychological screening
	A sexually transmitted disease (STD)	STD tests, HIV test, Pap test, pelvic exam
	Lived or worked with someone exposed to tuberculosis (TB)	TB test
	A serious injury (cut or laceration)	Tetanus-diphtheria booster vaccine
	A baby recently (within the last few weeks or months)	Postpartum depression screening

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